



## Public Safety Bulletin

### Safe Online Holiday Shopping

Holiday shopping online from the comfort of your own home offers great perks – especially when it comes to skipping the crowds and long lines! You can even save with online-only discounts, and by avoiding spending money on gas driving from store to store. Will you choose to click from the comfort of your couch this season? Carefree online holiday shopping starts with some smart tips:

- **Look for the lock.** When you're shopping online, look for sites that have secure sockets layer (SSL) encryption on the payment page. This will keep your credit card information safe. You may also see a padlock symbol on the payment page. This lets you know that your shopping experience will be a safe one.
- **Keep your personal information private.** The savvy online shopper gives out as little personal information as possible. Rarely will a website require private information from you, so there's no reason to give your Social Security Number or birthdate for online shopping.
- **Passwords.** You may want to consider using different passwords for each site as an added layer of online shopping protection. Choosing passwords with a mix of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and symbols is key for avoiding ID theft when shopping online.
- **Going mobile.** Good news for mobile shoppers! Mobile apps provided by the retailer tend to be more secure and are often easier to use than their websites.
- **Statements.** Reading your credit card or banking statements closely will alert you to any unauthorized purchases. If you see anything questionable on your statement, the sooner you contact your bank or financial institution the better.
- **Questionable clicks.** The last thing you need during the holiday season is a phishing scam disguised as a discount for online shopping. If you receive an unsolicited email with a link, your best bet is to avoid clicking. Instead, check out the company's website and see if the offer is legit.
- **Purchase power.** Double-checking the price, shipping, handling, taxes and other costs before you click "purchase" is a good idea. It's also smart to check return policies for restocking or return fees in case your purchase isn't quite what you (or the gift recipient) expected.
- Keeping these online shopping tips in mind will help you avoid ID theft and fraud, so you can shop with ease and enjoy a joyous holiday season.

***Call police by dialing 911***

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